

A

REPLY,

&c. &c.

A
R E P L Y

BY

SIR WILLIAM ADAMS

TO A

RECENT PUBLICATION AGAINST HIM,

PURPORTING TO BE THE

“ *REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE*

OF

The London Infirmary,

FOR

CURING DISEASES OF THE EYE.”



London :

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AGAIN I am attacked in the name of the London Eye Infirmary—again the same hostile spirit, which appears to have increased in venomous activity, as I have had the good fortune to advance in professional success, has endeavoured to annoy my feelings, and to depreciate my character. But the patronage with which I have been honored by the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, and by His Majesty's Government, has, it seems, given great umbrage to Doctor Farre, Mr. Travers, and Mr. Battley; and the Circular Letter of the Secretary at War, announcing the establishment of an Ophthalmic Hospital at Chelsea, under my superintendence, has evidently aggravated that umbrage, because they themselves sought in vain for the latter patronage.

To have obtained this patronage, notwithstanding a tissue of indefatigable slander and insidious opposition, is, indeed, a sin which my calumniators are not likely to forgive. Those individuals who sought to crush my efforts, and to destroy my fame, are mortified by their defeat; but still they seem determined to persevere, and hence I am again under the necessity of replying to their publication, or perhaps I should speak more correctly, to the production of Doctor Farre, assisted by Mr. Travers; for these gentlemen are, I am assured, the authors of the publication which has just issued from the press, with the imposing title of the "Report of the Committee of the London Eye Infirmary, " occasioned by the false and calumnious statements con-

“tained in a Letter by Sir William Adams to the Directors
“of Greenwich Hospital.” That Doctor Farre and Mr.
Travers are the authors, managers, and prompters of this
renewed attack—that the plot and composition originated
with them, will, I think, become manifest from the
sequel.

But the pamphlet itself proclaims the basis upon which
it is founded. Two letters from Doctor Farre, which are
dated the 3d and 10th of March, form the groundwork of
the slanderous advertisements which have appeared in se-
veral of the public journals, and are evidently the cause and
main-spring of the Report of the *Special Committee*. One
of these letters is addressed to Sir C. Price, who still was
not induced to give the sanction of his name to the Report
which it precedes; nay, who, as I have been assured, has ex-
pressed his disapprobation of any further proceedings against
me through the *Infirmiry*.

The Committee assembled on the 11th of March, to
receive the Report of the *Special Committee*, and to pass
Resolutions thereon; so that Doctor Farre’s letters would
appear to have been delivered only a day or two before the
Special Report was presented to this General Committee; but
that the letters excited and occasioned the Report, or rather,
that both were drawn up by the same pen, is the impression
which circumstances induce me to entertain; especially as
I have been informed, it was some months since pompously
and publicly announced by Doctor Farre, that he intended to
reply to me “*through the Infirmiry*.” This must be, indeed,
I should think the impression of every man of ordinary dis-
cernment, who takes the trouble of reading and considering
the whole of this pamphlet; more particularly when told,
that it has been declared to me, by a most respectable
member, and seceder from the Committee of 1814, that
the unfounded statement and resolutions against me, pub-
lished in the *Special Report* of that year, were drawn up

by the Medical Officers themselves, and signed by that Committee, through their confidence in the integrity and ability of those Officers.

What then is to be thought of a writer, who sets out with a false pretence—who seeks to confer a fictitious authority upon his work—who declares that to be the “ Report of the London Eye Infirmary,” which was actually the production of his own pen? Will Doctor Farre deny that he is really the author of the Report to which I refer? But having said so much upon the author and origin of this extraordinary production, I now proceed to animadvert upon the description of persons employed to give it currency.

Irksome and unpleasant as controversy is to my feelings, and injurious as it must be to my pursuits, from the time and attention which it necessarily occupies, I am still compelled to engage in it ; but rather with a view to expose systematic misrepresentation, to which the character of any man is liable, than from any apprehension of professional competition, which no fair mind would interrupt. Before, however, I enter into the particulars of the elaborate publication to which I advert, I shall shew that it cannot be considered as the *emanation* of the *General Committee* of the London Eye Infirmary, as its title purports.

The General Committee, consisting of *seventy members*, besides the Officers of the Institution, is composed of two descriptions of persons :—the first are gentlemen, whose names and influence, from their high respectability and fortune, are calculated to advance the consequence and interests of the establishment, but who very rarely attend to, or interfere with its immediate management. The other class of persons may be termed the Acting Committee, who regulate, who have, in fact, the whole management of the Institution, and consists principally of the Medical and

other Officers of the Infirmary, their immediate relations, and connexions.

The Special Report published in 1814, containing charges against me, to which my Letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital was a reply, was signed by twenty-six Members of the General Committee, including not only the Medical Officers of the institution and their different connexions, but also some highly-respectable individuals.

I have now, however, peculiar satisfaction in stating, that although I published the names of these gentlemen in my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, declaring that they had ventured to pronounce upon the merits of my moral as well as my professional character, upon the *ex-parte* statement of their medical officers, contrary to every principle of justice—without affording me an opportunity of bringing them acquainted with the real circumstances of the case—that they had also, through their confidence in those medical officers, published their opinions upon medical subjects, in regard to which a large majority of them must necessarily be ignorant, thereby unconsciously becoming the instruments of medical intrigue and professional jealousy; still so convinced have these respectable individuals become of the injustice done me, that two names only, out of the twenty-six composing that committee, are prefixed to the present Report; excepting those of Doctor Farre, Messrs. Travers, Battley, and their relations or immediate connexions.

And here I cannot pass over in silence the high sense I entertain of the candour evinced by the respectable seceders from that committee, who have thus unequivocally marked their conviction of the truth of the observations contained in my letter to the Directors. Even Mr. Lawrence, who on the former occasion was one of the three professional officers who signed the Medical Report, Doctor Gooch, Mr.

Travers's brother-in-law, and Mr. Olive, Mrs. Saunders's friend and trustee, have withdrawn from the junto who assume the title of "The Committee of the London Eye Infirmary!!"

Hearing from various quarters that Doctor Farre intended to reply to my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, "through the infirmary"—and observing by the newspapers that a meeting of the General Committee of that Institution, was convened for the 21st of last November, (to many of the members of which, I was informed, private notes had been sent), I addressed a circular letter to the General Committee, containing a condensed view of the nature of the controversy and the character of those to whom I was opposed. This letter induced some gentlemen to attend who are not in the habit of frequenting those meetings, and in particular, one of the members for Middlesex, who was sharply attacked by Doctor Farre for coming there "as the advocate of Sir W. Adams." In reply Mr. Byng declared "that he did not come as an advocate for Sir W. Adams, but to express his decided opinion that the controversy in question was of a professional nature; that any interference on the part of the infirmary could not fail to injure the interests and character of the institution, and that therefore, it would be better to leave the medical gentlemen to settle the controversy between themselves."

Against another gentleman, from whom the medical officers had been apprized some resistance of their unjust persecution of me was to be apprehended, the door was at first closed; but this gentleman being a vice-president, he was at length permitted to appear among the committee, who were convened to witness the concerted proceedings of the Medical Officers.* The arguments, however, of those two gentlemen seemed to prevail so strongly, that the in-

* As Mr. Lawrence's name is not prefixed to this Report, I am not to be understood to include him among "the Medical Officers."

tention of replying to me "through the infirmary" was at that time prevented.

The Medical Officers had still, however, sufficient influence to obtain the formation of a committee, composed exclusively of members who had signed the Special Report against me in 1814, to which were added eight members of the committee, before whom Mr. Deane had made his extraordinary declaration in 1810, thus calculating that I should experience no particular degree of favour from minds conceived to entertain a prejudice against me. This Special Committee was directed to take into consideration my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, and to report to the General Committee.

After an interval of four months, during which almost the whole of the independent and more respectable part of the committee altogether seceded, namely, Sir C. Price the president, Alderman Ansley, Michael Bland, John Cazenove, George Clarke, S. S. Hunt, John Smith, John Twemlow, Richard Wace, Thomas Amsinck, John Mackie, Jeremiah Olive, R. H. Sparks, William Lawrence, esqrs., with Doctors Davis, Gooch, and the Rev. Mr. Crowther. The Report was signed by the remaining members, and a General Committee was convened. But contrary to the plan pursued by the Medical Officers in November, no circular letter, as I am informed, was sent to the members to apprise them of this meeting; at least not to those who had expressed any disapprobation of further proceedings against me in the name of the Infirmary, and who had declared their wish to attend the next General Meeting.

Such was the conduct of men who wish to be accredited for impartiality, and to procure currency for their representations. In a Note to the Report, on which I am remarking, (p. 31.) it is stated, that "*seventy-six gentlemen are summoned on all General Committees,*"—Were so many summoned to receive this Report?—If so, how comes it that twenty-one

names only, appear as the Committee which sanctioned and authorized its publication? Fourteen even of this number are of the Special Committee, the supposed framers of the Report itself!! Thus it appears that while more than one-half the Committee, appointed to examine and report upon my letter to the Directors, (and those the more independent and respectable part) have altogether withdrawn from it,—four additional signatures alone could be obtained to sanction any further hostile proceedings against me. The inference from these facts is so obvious as to render any comment unnecessary, and the public will judge what degree of attention is due to the Report signed by

Mr. Solomon Hougham, Silversmith, in the Chair—vacated by *Sir Charles Price, Bart.*

- { Doctor Farre—Physician of the Infirmary.
- { Mr. William Crawley—his father-in-law, Druggist.
- { Mr. Harry Sedgewick—Dr. Farre's intimate friend.
- { Mr. Travers—late Surgeon of the Infirmary.
- { Mr. Tyrrel—one of the present Surgeons.
- { Mr. Pitches—Solicitor of the Infirmary.
- { Mr. Mathew Heathfield—present Secretary of the Infirmary.
- { Mr. Richard Heathfield—his brother.
- { Mr. Rich. Battley—the late Secretary of the Infirmary }
- { Mr. Thomas Churchyard—his brother-in-law } Druggists
- { Mr. William Brydon }
- { Mr. John Hodgkinson }
- { Mr. John Horner }
- { Mr. Thomas Sparks }

Ralph Price, Esq.*

* The name of Mr. Price connected with this document I have seen with considerable surprise and regret, especially recollecting the explanation which I made to him in November last, and the manner in which he appeared to receive that explanation. But I remember that Mr. Price at that time expressed an extravagant confidence in Dr. Farre, and a sense of obligation to Mr. Travers, while he manifested an eager desire to palliate the conduct of Mr. Battley.

John Bainbridge, Jun. Esq. * } Merchants.
 John Croskey, Esq. }

Mr. Richard Redman—Ship-Broker.

Mr. John Clark, and Mr. John Dean †.

Among the persons then composing this Committee, it will be seen that fifteen are the medical or other officers of the Infirmary—their immediate relations, connexions, and friends. No less than seven of the members are druggists!—Perhaps the fact of Dr. Farre's father-in-law—the Secretary Battley, and his brother-in-law, being all three in that line of business, may account for this circumstance.

But will the Governors at large of the London Eye Infirmary permit this selected assemblage to appear the authoritative organ of their sentiments—to publish *in the name of the General Committee* such slanderous and libellous advertisements upon the character of an individual as have lately appeared in the public newspapers—and to do so too in defiance of the opinion of so many of the most respectable members of that Committee?

The insertion of these advertisements must have cost no inconsiderable sum. The printing of pamphlets must have been also expensive. By whom, or from what resources has this expense been defrayed? If from the funds subscribed for the support of the London Eye Infirmary, I need not characterize such misappropriation—if from the pockets of the individuals with whom the reports originated, what is the inference? But in either case, what must be the motive which could prompt to such expenditure, for the purpose of wounding the feelings and depreciating the character of

* Not John Bainbridge, Esq., who signed the Report of 1814.

† I have not been able to find out who these Gentlemen are, although I have made every possible inquiry. But I see, in the Directory, that there is a Mr. John Dean, a Cheese-monger.

an individual—what else than eager personal malignity, than systematic professional jealousy? For, be it remembered, that this controversy originated with the Medical Officers of the Infirmary. They were the first to attack, without receiving from me the slightest offence or injury. They assailed me under the pretence of solicitude for the fame of Mr. Saunders, whose fame I had never injured. But what peculiarly aggravates the conduct of my adversaries—their assault was made at the very outset of my professional career, when I was comparatively unknown, and, when they obviously calculated upon destroying my prospects of professional success.

Dr. Farre, in the name of the Special Committee, sets out by saying, “ They do not consider it consistent with “ the nature and principles of the Institution, to enter into a “ contest with any individual, and that it will not be expected that they should undertake the work of Medical “ Controversy.” It would, on the first view, appear strange, that any of those persons who had voluntarily undertaken this work, and pronounced their verdict upon medical subjects in 1814, should now so materially alter their line of conduct and mode of expression, thus condemning their own former proceeding. But the change is accounted for by my proof that the opinions formerly promulgated by them were wholly destitute of truth and justice, as indeed, those Medical Officers well know, is now universally admitted throughout the profession. If the Medical Officers and their friends had, in 1814, thus declined to “ undertake the work of Medical Controversy,” I should not have felt it necessary to publish my Letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, to which the recent Report professes to reply.

This Report classes the subject for discussion, under the four following heads:—1st. The general direction and

management of the Infirmary. 2dly. The merits of the late J. C. Saunders, esq., the founder of the Infirmary. 3dly. The conduct of the Committee towards the late Mrs. Colkett, the widow of Mr. Saunders; and 4thly. The conduct of the Medical Officers.

Upon the first head it were idle to dwell. For I have never disputed the merits of the Infirmary, or the good it has produced, but I do deny the truth of the allegation contained in the Report, that what I have introduced to public notice, is “the practice which I was taught at the Infirmary.” The fallacy of this notion I have proved in my Letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, where the nature of my present practice, as contrasted with that which *was* pursued at the London Eye Infirmary, is fully explained. I have further to observe on the first head, that however universal was “the diffusion of the modes of cure practised by the Medical Directors of the London Eye Infirmary,” however “great the number,” or however “high the rank” of the pupils instructed by them, whether those pupils were “natives of the West Indies, America, Germany, Portugal, or other parts of the globe,” the fact for which I have contended, and which Doctor Farre still affects to deny, is fully established—namely, that the “*general existence*” of the granulations of the lids—the necessity for their removal—as well as a certain mode of cure for such cases of Egyptian Ophthalmia, were unknown to the Army Medical Board, and to the Surgeons of the Army, until I made my practice known in 1812.

Now as to Mr. Saunders.—It has uniformly been the policy of the framers of this Report, to excite against me the hostility of the friends of Mr. Saunders, by representing, that I had acted ungratefully and dishonourably towards

him. But upon what grounds do they support this charge ; or can they fairly maintain that any act or expression of mine has rendered necessary " the vindication of his memory ? " The merits of Mr. Saunders as a man, and his skill as an oculist, have ever been the subject of my unqualified panegyric. The style, indeed, in which I have habitually spoken of this excellent man may be collected from my work on Diseases of the Eye, published in 1812, as well as from the following extract of my letter, addressed to the West of England Eye Infirmary, dated Nov. 1st, 1809.

" To Mr. Saunders I feel more particularly grateful, for having, in the most disinterested and friendly manner, not only allowed me to witness the practice of the London Eye Infirmary, over which he presides, but also for having instructed me in his method of curing cataract, the only one which has been shewn to be applicable at an early age to children troubled with that disease. Mr. Saunders has likewise the originality of having first marked the character of inflammation of the iris, and of having pointed out its appropriate method of cure. The discovery of a successful mode of treating those most inveterate and distressing consequences, produced by the Egyptian ophthalmia, has further been the result of his scientific and unwearied investigations. Upon these highly-important subjects and some others, he has been hitherto prevented by ill health and numerous professional avocations, from making known to the world the success of his labours. But these, I confidently anticipate, will shortly be published."

A copy of this letter, with the report in which it was inserted, was forwarded to the London Eye Infirmary,—yet four months afterwards, upon the authority of such a witness as Mr. Deane, the medical officers of that institution accused me of seeking to deprive Mr. Saunders of his posthumous fame, by an attempt to publish as my own, those very discoveries which I had so distinctly and unequivocally attributed to him in this letter, and that absurd charge they now repeat with most unblushing effrontery.

They complain, and that in the most offensive terms, of

my publication of Mr. Russell's letter, referring to Mr. Saunders's refusal in 1809, to make known his mode of cure to the Commander-in-Chief, for the benefit of the army, or to allow me to do so, in compliance with the request of General Thewles. But the production of that letter, *they* rendered necessary to the vindication of my character against their own unjust aspersions, in what purported to be a Report from the London Eye Infirmary, respecting my conduct on that occasion.

In no respect, however, have I directly or indirectly questioned the purity of Mr. Saunders, or "censured his name," unless it be deemed censure to assert my own right,—unless it be deemed a depreciation of his fame, and inconsistent with the gratitude which I owe to my friend and preceptor, to alledge that which I have proved,—namely, that I have improved upon his practice, that I have advanced the science to which his life was devoted.

Were Mr. Saunders alive, he would, I am confident, readily acknowledge, and liberally and openly patronise the improvements and discoveries which his professed advocates pertinaciously and publicly deny, although they well know, that my instruments and operations are now employed by their own surgeons at the infirmary. Mr. Saunders would be incapable of publicly condemning what he privately practised; but he was in feeling, principle and character, different, very different indeed from those who affect to be his admirers and imitators.

This adoption of my practice appears from the following statement, which was made by a gentleman, a pupil of the London Eye Infirmary, before a numerous class of students, who were attending my lectures at the York Hospital on the 8th instant. There were also present my two assistants and an eminent physician, who noted the particulars of this statement—and a copy of whose notes I have in my possession.

This gentleman stated to the following effect:—

That he had been attending the London Eye Infirmary nearly twelve months—that the constant practice of its surgeons for curing the granulations of the lids, caused by the Egyptian ophthalmia, is to remove them with a knife, and not with the scissors as recommended by Mr. Saunders.

That the present practice for the cure of cataract at the infirmary is, in the first instance, to perform the operation pursued by Mr. Saunders, and described by Dr. Farre, in his posthumous work; but this being found, in most instances, insufficient to remove the disease, unless frequently repeated, my operation is afterwards performed with a sharp-cutting instrument, such as that which I have invented and published; adding, that where there is any adhesion of the cataract my operation is at the first performed.

In the Medical Report of 1814, to which are prefixed the names of Dr. Farre, Messrs. Travers and Lawrence, it is asserted, that with respect to the granulations of the lids caused by the Egyptian ophthalmia, “ I have
“ only made the *unimportant* alteration of removing the
“ diseased growth by a different instrument.”

This instrument, according to the above statement, it has been found necessary to employ upon the patients of the infirmary; and I learn that my subsequent treatment is pursued for the cure of that disease.

In the same Report the medical officers affirm, with regard to my practice for the cure of cataract, “ that whilst
“ Mr. Saunders reduced the cutting edge of his instrument, Mr. Adams increased it; whilst the former inflicted less violence on the eye, the latter inflicted more,
“ and performed the same thing in a ruder way.” “ That
“ the modification of Mr. Saunders’s operation, practised
“ by Sir W. Adams, exposes the patient to the risk of an
“ acute inflammation, imminently hazarding the safety of
“ the organ.”

Yet, by the above statement of one of their own pupils, it appears that a sharp-cutting instrument, similar to mine, (al-

though so much depreciated), is that now actually employed at the infirmary ; and that, in many instances, my operation, which they have ventured to describe, as “ imminently hazzarding the safety of the organ,” is now performed by their own surgeons in preference to that upon which these medical officers had bestowed such unqualified panegyric.

What then, I ask, must be the decision of the profession, and of the public, upon the candour of Dr. Farre, when they find him, in his letter to Sir Charles Price, referring to the conclusions of the medical officers in 1814, as if their still-existing opinions—when they find his name, as well as that of Mr. Travers, prefixed to the present report, wherein the committee are represented to declare, “ that they cannot be expected to undertake the work of “ medical controversy;” while it is evident from the facts contained in the foregoing statement, the controversy is at an end. What, in a word, will be the opinion of the Governors of the London Eye Infirmary, of the conduct of their medical officers, when they discover that the funds of their institution have been expended by the publication of the Special Report of 1814, with a view to mislead public opinion, in regard to my instruments and operations, while those very instruments and operations are now employed by themselves for the benefit of the patients of the infirmary ?

With regard to the conduct of Doctor Farre and Co. towards Mrs. Colkett, the widow of Mr. Saunders, the authors of this report condemn me without measure for censuring that conduct, alledging that my statements are unfounded, and my comments unjust. But my censors should recollect that those are *not my statements*. For how stands the

case? Mrs. Colkett published a circular letter, dated February, 1814, from which the following is an extract:—

(CIRCULAR.)

“When it pleased Providence to take away my late husband from this world of trouble at the early age of thirty-seven, and when he had reaped little other advantage from his successful practice than the private satisfaction of doing good; it was well known to the Committee in what situation I was placed by his lamented death, and they kindly undertook to finish and publish at their own expense (at the expense of the infirmary) for my use and benefit, a work on Diseases of the Eye, which Mr. Saunders had nearly completed, and would have published had his life been spared a little longer. The produce of this publication, I had every reason to suppose, would have realized for me nearly 1,000*l.*, which sum would, of course, have been paid down to me, or laid out in an annuity for me, in neither of which cases could I have lost any part of the money by a second marriage. The Committee afterwards altered their original plan, and thought it better to allow me an annuity of 40*l.* per year from their own funds; this was regularly agreed to, and confirmed by a General Meeting of the Governors, and inserted in the Journals of the Establishment in these words:—

“To the widow of Mr. Saunders, for and during the term of her natural life,” &c. &c.

“It will not be necessary for me to state at length my reasons for changing my situation, nor do I at all think it was a question which concerned the Committee; suffice it to say, that I was not conscious of sinning against any law, human or divine, in so doing, and that I married again as before stated.

“This great crime so offended some of the Committee, that, without pretending to assign any other reason, a meeting was called, at which only six gentlemen were present, and a resolution passed to rescind the annuity of 40*l.* per year to me, which resolution will be submitted to the Governors on the 18th instant, for their assent or dissent.

“I shall abstain from any personal remarks on the conduct of any of those gentlemen by whose interference the grant was attempted to be rescinded, and content myself with a bare statement of the facts, in the full assurance that I shall not be forsaken on this occasion, and in the earnest hope that you will attend on the day appointed, and join my other friend in bestowing on me, now *that I am actually*

in a situation to want it, the continuance of this annuity, as originally granted; and which I hope you will not think too much for the eminent services of my late husband, for whose sake alone it was first given, and with whose opinion, with respect to second marriages, I was so fully acquainted, that could he even now speak from the tomb, I am convinced he would not condemn me.

I am, &c. &c.

JANE LOUISA COLKETT,

(Widow of the late J. C. Saunders, &c. &c.)"

45, Penton-street, Walworth,

15th Feb. 1814.

The substance of this letter was corroborated in various written and verbal communications to me, from both Mrs. Colkett and her husband, as well as from other sources. Upon those communications then, I felt myself authorized to make the comments which appear in my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital. Of the distressed and desolate condition in which Mrs. Colkett was left in consequence of the revocation of the annuity, granted her by the Committee of the London Eye Infirmary, and my allusion to which appears to have given such pain to the Medical Officers, I could entertain no doubt. The letters of Mrs. Colkett herself were conclusive upon that subject, and for the establishment of my own veracity as well as for the vindication of the character of Mrs. Colkett herself, I feel it necessary to publish the following extracts from those letters, while the originals I am ready to shew to any respectable gentleman who may desire to see them, and will favour me with a call, either at my house in Albemarle-street, or at the establishment which I am about to open in the city.

"Since you have kindly interested yourself so much in our affairs, it may not be considered troublesome my relating to you a fresh source of great uneasiness to us, in not receiving some cash this week, which we considered as sure and safe as the Bank could be. You will, I dare

say, be surprised when I tell you that I allude to the quarterly allowance my father has been in the habit of sending, and which, it seems, he is not able to let us have this quarter, on account of his having recently released ———— again from arrest. Had my father apprized us he should not have been able to send till next quarter, we could have arranged things accordingly, but unfortunately he never gave us the least notice."—"Our disappointment, when we received my father's letter, was most heavy, as we actually had people at the moment at the door, for payment of little Bills, which we firmly intended to pay from that money we knew ourselves entitled to expect. In consequence, however, of our not receiving it, we are placed in a more painful situation than I would wish to mention to any one."—"My husband's being unable to procure a situation (since our marriage) together with *the disappointment of the Annuity from the Infirmary*, has been the means of involving us in debt to a considerable amount—so much so, that my husband is now daily in expectation of being arrested, which is a still greater drawback to his gaining employment, *for we have not one friend to relieve us.** My father, God bless him, being already encumbered with the debts of———"In consequence of the disappointment from the Eye Infirmary, I am very ill at ease, from the debts *necessity* has compelled us to contract, and we are now in great trouble. To prove to you how difficult we have found it to live, I must assure you on my word, we have been under the necessity of asking our landlady to take goods for rent, which she has kindly done. Not only have we parted with goods, but also our little plate—my watch, and even my beloved late husband's miniature I have been obliged to pledge. *Necessity*, the most urgent, has compelled me to the last step." "But distress on distress has constantly awaited us, and anxiety has impaired considerably the health of both."—"After thus stating our difficulties, may I presume to solicit for my husband the recommendation of some permanent situation of Sir William Adams, of whose zeal to serve me I cannot doubt, after such proofs given of his disinterested friendship? If I have presumed too far, I have an excuse to offer—*my necessities.*"

Such is the testimony upon which I proceeded—but still

* Where were her *anxious friends*, the Medical Officers, at the time she wrote this Letter?

more with a view to assure myself of accuracy upon this part of the case, in consequence of the peculiarly delicate tendency of Mrs. Colkett's statements, I had a *proof* of that part of my Pamphlet which related to the Proceedings of the Committee that determined upon the subject of her Appeal, submitted to the correction of a Rev. Gentleman, who was present at that Meeting.—From this most respectable Clergyman, I received a full assurance of the correctness of my information with respect to the eager and successful arguments of Dr. Farre, to deprive the relict of his friend, of the annuity, which was so necessary to save her from absolute indigence.—With such an host of evidence upon that ground, could I entertain a doubt of the statements which I made in my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital?

In the Report upon which I am animadverting, and in which Mrs. Colkett's circular letter is pronounced "grossly incorrect," I am apprized of certain proceedings on the part of the London Eye Infirmary.—But of those proceedings or resolutions I never was aware until I read this Report. The circular of Mrs. Colkett was *published* four years ago.—It was distributed among all the subscribers of the London Eye Infirmary, as well as among many other individuals; and yet the medical officers, whose conduct it so particularly implicated, never printed or published any reply until within this last month. They cannot therefore be justly angry with me, or with any other person, who, in the absence of any opposing proof, or even of mere contradiction, should have decided according to the statement of Mrs. Colkett.

In answer to that statement, the Report alledges that Mrs. Colkett's annuity was granted with the "*understanding*" that it should be revoked in case she married a second time. But what are the words of the grant as stated

in this Report?—Why these—“an annuity of 40*l.* net for “*the term of her natural life*, to be paid half-yearly by the “Treasurer, under the direction of the Committee.”—That the “understanding” alluded to is not expressed in the terms of this grant will, I presume, be promptly admitted; and that any such understanding is implied, it is impossible for any man acquainted with the English language seriously to contend. Yet this grant was revoked, and, I repeat it, through the influence alone of the medical officers—for at the first meeting, which determined upon that revocation, it is admitted that only six gentlemen were present, namely, Dr. Farre, his father-in-law, his father-in-law’s partner, Messrs. Travers and Battley, and their friend Mr. Sedgewick. Yet the authors of this Report are quite angry with me for calling it “A Special Committee.”—They alledge that it was a *Quarterly General Committee*.—Now they state, in p. 31., “that seventy-six gentlemen are summoned on all General Committees;” yet only these six happened to attend upon this particular occasion!—Does this marvellous occurrence manifest a fairness of disposition towards Mrs. Colkett?

But notwithstanding all these circumstances that I hope will acquit me of any disposition to deliberate mis-statement, which I would disdain towards the worst enemy, when assured last November by Mr. Ralph Price, who is a member of the committee, that I had been misled by the statements of Mrs. Colkett, I immediately offered explanation. I wrote a letter to Mr. Price, which I requested him, and he promised, to lay before his colleagues of the Committee. In this letter I desired permission to adduce before the Committee, the evidence upon which my statements rested; adding, that if proved incorrect, I would willingly publish the expression of my regret at having been so misled. Mr. Price did not lay this letter before the Committee, as he has informed me, but stated to them its contents. In this, however, like many other efforts which I have made to effect a fair

and honourable adjustment of this controversy, with the Medical Officers of the Institution, *I was entirely disappointed.**

The Report affirms that Mrs. Colkett “received the utmost kindness from the Medical Officers”—“that their care extended to the last hour of her life,” and that “she was not exposed to the pressure of absolute want.” In reply to this affirmation I refer to the letters of Mrs. Colkett herself, which are entitled to, at least, as much credit as the self-praise of those Medical Officers.

But as to the Fourth Division of the Report, namely, “the conduct of the Medical Directors and Officers of the Infirmary,” Dr. Farre, in the name of the Committee, endeavours to explain away the four successive attacks which have been made upon me by the Infirmary, or rather by its Officers. Mr. Battley’s printed Circular, which was sent in December 1814, to H. R. H. the Commander in Chief, the First Lord of the Admiralty, to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, to all the Subscribers of the London Eye Infirmary, to all the Profession in the Metropolis, as well as to the different Medical Reviews for insertion; Dr. Farre and Co. now disclaim, stating that it was not authorized by them or by the Infirmary. This uncalled for, obtrusive, insidious letter, which even Dr. Farre does not attempt to vindicate, although evidently willing to excuse it, because written against me, was, however, the source and origin of the whole controversy. Battley it was who flung the first

* I also addressed a letter to Sir Charles Price in the month of December last, as President of the London Eye Infirmary, in which letter I requested to be present at one of the Meetings of the Committee then sitting, to examine the statements contained in my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, in order to give further explanation on some points, as well as to submit additional documentary evidence, which would enable the Committee to form a correct judgment of that publication previously to their coming to any conclusions thereupon.

stone, and yet his medical colleagues disavow his act while they applaud his motive. Upon this letter they observe that I comment at some length; that is, I prove it incontrovertibly, by written documents, to be replete with statements absolutely false. They state that it was written "without doubt, under strong excitement, from the persuasion that the honors and the credit which he (B.) considered due to the name of Mr. Saunders and to the Infirmary, were unduly assumed by Sir W. Adams." Dr. Farre declares that, "in writing his appeal, Mr. Battley discharged a duty." Now, although I have unanswerably shewn that, which even this report does not attempt to controvert, namely, the entire absence of truth in the charges this person endeavoured to establish against me, yet in the face of his conviction he is thus eulogized. "Mr. Battley's claims to the *respect* and acknowledgment of the "Governors surpass any encomium in the power of your "Committee to bestow!!" There is really something ludicrous in seeing Mr. Battley's *own name*, as one of the Committee who sign this eulogium.

This, however, is not the only instance of the ludicrous which this Report presents. For, it not only panegyricizes the Medical Officers individually, dwelling, for example, upon the "fortunate selection of Mr. Travers, to succeed Mr. Saunders," at the Infirmary, and upon "the patient research and sound professional judgment of Dr. Farre," but it extols those Officers collectively, in the following lofty terms, "gentlemen distinguished by their public and "private worth—by the liberal and extensive application "of their eminent and scientific attainments—and by their "private benevolence." Yet this Report is sanctioned, and signed, nay, I have every reason to believe, actually drawn up by the very persons whom it thus eulogizes!!!

But the fact is, that the Medical Officers are the authors and prompters of almost every proceeding at the Infirmary.

Through their management and influence the members of the Committee are appointed. This, indeed, is pretty clearly avowed by Mr. Battley, in a letter which he addressed to me, last October, in which he emphatically states, "I will take care you shall not be of that body (the General Committee) without another person being elected with you," intimating that some one decidedly hostile (perhaps Mr. Deane) should be appointed along with me. But let the reader estimate the confident assertion of a controlling power over the concerns of the Infirmary, which this letter from its Secretary implies. Upon reading it, I was myself somewhat astonished, and some of my friends thought it not genuine; I, however, put the letter into the hands of Mr. Byng last November, to shew to the General Committee, if he thought proper, and Mr. Battley has since publicly avowed it.

The authors of the Report labour to palliate their attacks upon me by referring to the grounds which they affect to say called upon or provoked them to make these attacks—but how do they succeed?—They pretend that their special Report in 1814 arose out of the "Official Papers"—Those Papers were not however published by me, but by the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, who avowedly "considered it their duty to give publicity to the Official Report of Proceedings upon a subject so interesting to humanity," and to "state well-authenticated facts respecting the comparative merits of the new and improved operations with the old mode of extraction." The omission of the names of Mr. Saunders, and of the Infirmary in these Official Papers, did not, as the authors of the Report alledge, proceed from want of information, for I had previously laid before the Board, and presented to each of its members a copy of my work upon Diseases of the Eye, in which I had strongly testified to the merits of Mr. Saunders. In that work, indeed, I thus express myself respecting Mr. Saunders. "I trust I shall be ex-

“ cused for introducing an acknowledgment of the obligations
 “ I owe to my deceased friend and preceptor. To his liber-
 “ rality I am indebted for that general knowledge of Diseases
 “ of the Eye, which has led to the practice of the operations
 “ recommended in this work.”

But my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, which was not written for publication (although the Directors thought proper to publish it), related solely to operations for cataract or artificial pupil, *not one of which had been taught me by Mr. Saunders.* Any reference, therefore, to Mr. S. upon that occasion, would have been quite irrelevant ; and I submit, that no liberal man would require that I should be silent with regard to improvements which experience and observation had enabled me to effect—because those improvements formed a deviation from the practice of my preceptor, who would, as I doubt not, were he now alive, most unequivocally approve of my system. Indeed, in the work to which I have just alluded, (p. 28), I published a letter, which I received from Mr. Saunders, *only eight months before his death*, wherein he thus congratulates me upon the success of one of these operations, that for cataract with adherent iris, and says—“ I shall give it a fair trial in such probable cases as may come in my way*.”

The medical officers, however, will not, in their publications, tolerate the idea that any part of my system is an improvement. Now, if so, how came it that Turner †, whose case was mentioned in the official papers, had

* By a mistake of my printer, this letter was dated the 19th instead of the 29th of June, 1809.

† The Report in a note states—“ This case is not admitted.” Now, I ask whether it can be denied. I feel confident that it cannot ; and this refusal to admit what cannot safely be denied, sufficiently illustrates the ingenuousness of those from whom this Report emanated.

thirteen operations for cataract performed upon him at the infirmary ; namely, seven operations upon one eye and six upon the other, but without effect, while I perfectly restored his sight by a single operation ? But to another patient of the London Eye Infirmary, who had been operated upon for cataract no less than seventeen times in that infirmary, namely, ten times on one eye and seven on another, I restored sight by a single operation on each. This was in the case of a child of about nine years of age, who had been the patient of Mr. Travers*.

I refer to these cases, to maintain my own character against the wanton and illiberal attacks of the Medical Officers of the London Eye Infirmary, who are actuated by motives which they would not feel it prudent to avow. Mr. Battley's motive is, however, sufficiently obvious. The letter of Mr. Corlett, which is already before the public, accounts for the hostility of Mr. Travers ; that of his friend and colleague, Dr. Farre, has been unremitting since the death of Mr. Saunders; and his letters in the recent publication, pretty clearly evince what are his feelings towards me.

To shew that Mr. Saunders was adverse to me for a long time before his death, and to induce the public to believe that I did not deserve his friendship, the authors of the Report give a garbled extract from one of my private letters. —Upon the publication of a private letter, addressed to an

* In my recent publication upon Cataract, I refer to another case of a child, labouring under the same species of cataract, whose parents having watched the progress of my operation upon this patient of Mr. Travers', and witnessed its successful issue, placed their child under my care. This case was operated upon in the presence of Dr. Bain. The cataracts were completely removed in ten days by a single operation on each eye, and at the end of three weeks, the patient had recovered sufficiently to leave town.

individual now no more, I need not make any comment—for comment enough must occur to any mind educated in gentlemanlike notions, or accustomed to regard just principles.—But the authors of the Report are mistaken in asserting, that Mr. Saunders was irreconcilably prejudiced against me; because, in a publication at Exeter, I had designated myself as his assistant at the London Eye Infirmary.—For, in reply to my explanation for so designating myself, without *previously asking* his permission, and not, as those authors assert, in defiance of his refusal to permit me so to do, I was favoured with a letter from Mr. Saunders, from which the following is an extract:—

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ Your letter has restored my former sentiments. I have freely declared the dissatisfaction which I felt: I am no hypocrite, and you may therefore truly believe my reconciliation equally sincere—let not another word be said on the subject!”

In a subsequent letter Mr. Saunders thus expresses himself:—“ But, my dear friend, your statement of being an Assistant and Pupil at the Infirmary, has caused more embarrassment to me than you are aware of—and I did not object to it through caprice, whatever your friend, Mr. Milford, may be inclined to think of it. Our Committee, to guard against my illness, and some with a view, perhaps, to ease me of some labours, have more than once, and some rather anxiously—proposed an assistant, which, for reasons I need not mention, I have opposed. Now the suspicion of some has been excited, that I have opposed their intentions on interested motives, that I might turn the appointment to my own emolument, * and that I have, to this degree, deviated from my profession of serving the charity disinterestedly.—I only therefore require, that in any publication which will admit of it, it may be expressed, that you had the advantages of an Assistant, through my friendship and inclination to advance your pursuits—that our *Committee may see it in a proper view.* †

Your's faithfully,

“ Sept. 1st, 1808.

J. C. SAUNDERS.”

* Are those who felt so liberally towards Mr. Saunders among the junto who now slander my character.

† The originals of these letters, so fully displaying the falsehood of my adversaries, I am ready to shew to any gentleman acquainted with the manuscript of Mr. Saunders.

With the request of Mr. Saunders I complied on the first opportunity, namely, the publication of the Report of the West of England Eye Infirmary, in November, 1809.*

The framers of this Report, when they unjustly accused Mr. Saunders of having withdrawn his confidence from me, of an entire change of sentiments towards me, were not perhaps themselves aware, that they were imputing to his conduct a system of confirmed duplicity, because passion is indiscriminating, and their resentment towards me is uncontrollable.

The Committee affect to dispute my assertion, that “as none of those now practising as Oculists had ever seen Mr. Saunders operate for Cataract, I am the legitimate successor of that eminent Oculist, declaring, that I was not made acquainted with his improvements later than 1807.”

But I am in possession of a letter from Mr. Saunders at the close of 1808, wherein he says, “If I had had any thing of importance beyond what you have seen me practise in the department of the Oculist, I should not have delayed to communicate it to you.”

From this extract, combined with the other quotations which I have given from the correspondence of Mr. Saunders, his disposition to communicate to me any improvements which he made will, I think, hardly be doubted.

Denying then the declaration of my adversaries, and repelling the insinuation that I ever applied through Mr. John Milford for that place at the London Eye Infirmary, which was recently occupied by Mr. Travers, having the authority of Mr. Milford for thus publicly asserting that he neither was requested by me to make, nor did make, any such application, I still maintain the

* See p. 11.

justice of my pretension to the character of Mr. Saunders's successor.—Like him I served a regular apprenticeship to the late Mr. Hill, of Barnstaple—like him, I completed my studies at Guy's and St. Thomas's Hospital.—I had seen the whole of his practice for more than twelve months, during which I assisted at his operations, both public and private. I had also most extensively carried his practice into effect, as well as materially improved upon it at the West of England Eye Infirmary—while Mr. Travers, when appointed by the London Eye Infirmary to succeed Mr. Saunders, had little or no practical knowledge in diseases of the eye;—He had had, indeed, no personal connexion whatever with Mr. Saunders, and therefore had to learn that gentleman's practice at second-hand.

Between Mr. Travers's claims therefore and mine, I shall leave it to others than the framers of the late Report to determine, while the profession will decide who has, since the death of Mr. Saunders, contributed most to the improvement of Ophthalmic Surgery.

But further the Committee declare, that they can find no trace of any correspondence between Mr. Saunders and me, later than May, 1809.

I have now before me from Mr. Saunders, a letter, dated June 29th, 1809, which begins with excusing himself for not answering my preceding letter sooner; stating the shock he had received by the sudden death of his sister. And this very letter, be it observed, wherein Mr. Saunders addresses me as usual, by the affectionate appellation of "my Dear Friend," was written *within five weeks* after I had made to him the proposal of communicating to the Commander-in-Chief, his practice for the cure of Ophthalmia, which proposal, the Medical Officers would have his friends and the public suppose Mr. Saunders considered as an ungenerous attempt on my part, to anticipate him in the communication of his practice. But the mind

of Mr. Saunders was as incapable of the low illiberal jealousy, as of the downright duplicity which, in their eager attempts to injure my character, his colleagues would impute to his conduct.

After declining to permit my communication of the discovery alluded to, I addressed to him a letter of explanation so satisfactory, that he promptly gave me credit for my motives in having made the proposal, and justly appreciated my ready compliance with his wishes. Our friendship continued without interruption. Within a fortnight, indeed, before his death, he sent me, through a gentleman of Exeter, a subscriber to the West of England Eye Infirmary, a particular application for the eye, accompanied by a letter, couched in those terms of kindness which he was accustomed to employ. But Mr. Milford, whose letter upon the subject is inserted in my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, and who had a conversation with Mr. Saunders three days before his death, testifies to that excellent man's unabated solicitude for my welfare.

With regard to the editing of the work of Mr. Saunders, I should deem it absurd to reason with those who could think me capable of the infamous as well as truly ridiculous proposal mentioned by Mr. Deane—for common sense would forbid the belief of such a story—no man, indeed, in the habit of examining probabilities, could attend to it for a moment.

Mr. Deane says, “ that I informed him Mr. Saunders’s work was in a state of great forwardness, if not already in the press; that I considered it would be most advantageous to me to have the credit of it—to have my name inserted in *lieu* of that of Mr. Saunders, and to be considered *the author*; adding, that if those desirable points could be obtained, I would readily pay Mrs. Saunders one hundred guineas, or whatever sum *her friends* might consider an equivalent.” Now, to obtain for me those

advantages, which it was alledged I sought, the affair must necessarily be transacted with the utmost secrecy; and to prevail on Mrs. Saunders to accept the sum offered, for surrendering the fame and honour of her husband, extraordinary delicacy must be observed, lest the friends of Mr. Saunders should have any intimation of what was going forward. How then was all this to be accomplished? Dr. Farre was in possession of the manuscript; he was, according to Mr. Deane's statement, to be made the accomplice of my design, and was to "assist me in the completion of the work;" but if he withheld his assistance, "Mr. Johnson, of Exeter, (another friend of Mr. Saunders) was to become my coadjutor;" and if "one hundred guineas" was not judged sufficient, "*Mrs. Saunders's friends*" were to decide upon an equivalent!"

Here then is a complication of machinery, and a variety of dramatis personæ, for the execution of a plot, which must still fail, unless secure of profound silence and secrecy. But were even all the persons who were to co-operate with me to preserve silence, still I could not calculate upon arrogating through such surreptitious means the merit of Mr. Saunders's work, because, four months before his death, in my letter to the West of England Eye Infirmary, already quoted, (p. 11.) I had expressed my expectation of this work, enumerating the discoveries which Mr. S. proposed to promulgate in that publication, while Mr. Saunders himself had, ten months before his death, announced his intention of publishing it.

How then could any attempt to make the unworthy use of this work, which is attributed to me, possibly escape detection?—Or can any person of common discernment suppose me capable of making such a proposition to a boy of twenty years of age, and a junior clerk in the Bank of England—especially after I had been apprized by that respectable gentleman, Mr. John Milford, of the extreme

prejudice against me in the mind of Dr. Farre, who had this work in his possession?

Is it then, I say, *possible*, that I could put my character in such a state of jeopardy, upon the speculation of obtaining such an impracticable object?

I wrote a full and explanatory letter to Dr. Farre, upon this subject as soon as I became acquainted with it, which I requested him to lay before the Committee of the London Eye Infirmary. This letter, after perusing it, Mr. John Milford forwarded to Dr. Farre, who now denies having received it. Letters sent by post generally reach their destination; or, if not, are returned to those by whom they are written, and certainly it has never been returned to me.

The proposal for editing Mr. Saunders's work, which I actually made through Mr. John Milford, would have been much more productive to Mrs. Saunders, than was the course pursued under the direction of Dr. Farre. Mrs. Colkett (Saunders) herself confessed her misunderstanding upon this subject in a letter to me, from which the following is an extract:

"Your intentions I cannot but consider have been misunderstood. Common justice, as well as gratitude, compel me to declare the same. I am heartily concerned to have been the cause of dissension between yourself and the Committee of the London Eye Infirmary, but hope the matter cannot possibly injure you in the slightest degree, and may yet be amicably adjusted. For my own part *I am more* than satisfied; grateful am I for *your continued* friendship, which must have been wholly disinterested, or you could not so readily have forgiven my late conduct. I sadly misunderstood your former proposal, respecting the manuscript of my dear late husband—which causes me the more readily now to credit your integrity."

It is curious to observe the strain in which Dr. Farre adverts to his services in preparing and disposing of the work of Mr. Saunders. To save me from any charge of perversion, I shall quote his own words.

“ Copy of Inquiry made by letter, addressed by Dr. Farre to Messrs. Longman and Co., who published Mr. Saunders's posthumous work.

“ Mr. Saunders's posthumous work consists of eight plates, and 216 pages of letter-press, besides 43 pages of introductory matter. *Of this work Mr. Saunders had prepared for publication, three figures, constituting a part only of one plate, and 48 pages of letter-press.*

“ 1st. What then, Gentlemen, would you have given for that part of the work which the author had prepared?

“ 2dly. Of that work, as completed by the editor, 750 copies were published, and all the expenses were defrayed by your house. At the end of eighteen months, 631 out of the 750 copies were sold, and a profit of 134*l.* was paid to Mrs. Colkett, besides 50*l.* for the copyright.

“ Copy of the reply.

“ LONDON, 17th Feb. 1814.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ In compliance with your request, we herewith transmit the following answers to your queries respecting the publication of Mr. Saunders on the Eye.

“ Mr. Saunders's posthumous work.

“ 1st. We should not have purchased, and it is doubtful if we should have taken the expenses on ourselves, of the work, as it was completed, &c. &c.

“ 2dly. The above is doubtless a handsome return, and without the exertions of the Committee, we consider it improbable that any profits would have arisen from the speculation.

“ Mrs. Saunders having received 134*l.* 5*s.* 2*d.* profit from the work, without consulting the editor, *improvidently sold her right and interest in 119 remaining copies, on which all the expenses had been paid, except on the plates for 50 copies; together with her right and interest in all future editions of the work, for the sum of fifty pounds.* Messrs. Longman and Co., who were the purchasers, have since acted in the most handsome and liberal manner, and *had Mrs. Saunders survived, an effort would have been made to direct the liberality of that respectable house to her advantage.*”

It appears that he who over-strains ingenuity and perverts facts, to fix upon me the imputation of desiring to depreciate the fame of Mr. Saunders, has no objection whatever, to say the least of it, very largely to *participate* of that fame. He declares "that which Mr. Saunders had prepared for publication, consisted of only 48 pages, and three figures forming a part only of one plate; but that he extended it to 216 pages and 8 plates." His bookseller states, and he himself thinks proper to publish, that "he (the "bookseller) would not have purchased the work in the state "in which it was left by Mr. Saunders," adding, "that "without the exertions of the Committee, he considers it "improbable that any profits would have arisen from the "speculation."

Mrs. Saunders, therefore, "received for her husband's "work but 134*l.* profit upon 631 copies, and then sold "her right and interest in 119 remaining copies, upon "which all the expenses had been paid, except on the "plates for fifty copies; together with her right to and "interest in all future editions of the work, for the sum of "50*l.*" She received from the committee of the London Eye Infirmary a gratuity of 50*l.* and two years' annuity of 40*l.*, making in the whole a sum of 314*l.*

Had I been permitted to edit Mr. Saunders's work, my proposal was to give Mrs. Saunders one hundred pounds—with the whole of the proceeds from its publication; and to add to Mr. Saunders's manuscript the result of my own experience, with respect to those diseases treated of by him. It was also my intention to add the discoveries and improvements which I had effected in the treatment of other diseases of the eye, and which I published the year after the appearance of Mr. Saunders's work. Upwards of six hundred copies of this work have been already disposed of.

The reader will determine which would have been more advantageous for Mrs. Saunders, that her husband's post-

humorous work should have been edited by Dr. Farre or by me *.

Having, I presume, satisfactorily repelled the charges adduced against me in the recent Report, as well as established my veracity in regard to the statements contained in my Letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, I cannot think it necessary to trespass longer upon the reader's attention.

I have shewn that the Medical Officers who framed the Report alluded to, have most unjustly censured my conduct. They attribute to me a disposition to depreciate Mr. Saunders, whom I have never ceased to praise, and to injure the London Eye Infirmary, which I have always wished to serve. They would use the character of Mr. Saunders and the Infirmary, as a shield for themselves and as a sword against me. Their misrepresentation, with regard to both these points, would alone serve to illustrate their character and object. For where writers resort to misrepresentation, the conclusion is natural, that they are themselves sensible of the want of any valid grounds of attack.

But the art which suggested the assertion of my enemies, as to a *presumed* hostility on my part towards Mr. Saunders and the Infirmary, is quite obvious. They wished and hoped, through the well-deserved popularity of Mr. Saunders and the Infirmary, to raise a cry against

* As a proof that I was correct in my assertion, that Mr. Saunders's work was published in an injudiciously expensive form, whereby its sale was retarded, Dr. Farre says a third edition is now called for.

The second edition, belonging to Messrs. Longman, was published less expensively than the first; and without any exertions on the part of the Committee, it appears, has been sold in little more than two years; while the first was not disposed of within double that time.

my character, by imputing to me a disposition to injure both. They would, indeed, ascribe to me the disregard of truth and of gratitude, especially with regard to Mr. Saunders, whose skill and humanity are the subjects of glowing eulogium, when it is their object to traduce me as his presumed censor, but whose fame they would let down very sily and smoothly, when they desire to advance the reputation of Dr. Farre, or the extent of their own influence, as the patrons of his work !

Now, as to the allegation that I have misrepresented the case of Mrs. Saunders, my statement, I repeat, was founded upon the evidence of Mrs. Saunders herself, accompanied by corroborative testimony. If I were misled by that evidence, no candid, considerate man, would therefore condemn me, for I should be merely in the condition of a juror pronouncing a verdict upon false testimony. But with regard to the evidence of Mrs. Saunders, I put this dilemma—Either that evidence is entitled to credit, or it is not—if the former, the statement which my adversaries call “ false and calumnious,” is completely substantiated ; if the latter, what becomes of the authority of the letter from Mrs. Saunders, which my adversaries insert in the Appendix to their report (p. 77) ; which, by the by, is the only testimony they adduce of their kindness and humanity towards that Lady ; and which letter, it will be observed, was written immediately after the publication of her husband’s work ; before the annuity was withdrawn from her, and before she suffered the distress consequent upon that act.

But independently of the evidence of Mrs. Saunders I have in the very Report upon which I am remarking, amply sufficient testimony, from the pen of my own censors, to maintain the principal allegations which I made respecting that Lady, in my Letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital. I alledged, first, that Mrs. Saunders had, upon the death of her husband, been granted by the London Eye

Infirmary an annuity of forty pounds a year, “for and during her natural life.”—secondly, that this annuity was withdrawn on her second marriage, through the influence of the Medical Officers of the Infirmary.—thirdly, that Mrs. Saunders did not receive from the publication of her husband’s work, such an amount of profit as she was entitled to expect.—fourthly, that she suffered great distress—and all these allegations are admitted in the Report before me, either expressly, or by implication. The first allegation is distinctly stated; for it is absurd to argue, that the words, “for her natural life, under the direction of the Committee;” instead of the words used by Mrs. Saunders, “for and during her natural life,” materially alter the nature of the grant; and, upon the first revocation of the annuity, it is admitted, that only the six gentlemen whom I had named, were present.

I asserted, that one of these six gentlemen canvassed the Governors of the Infirmary to attend the meeting, subsequently called to ratify this revocation. The Report declares, “that this allegation is unreservedly and wholly denied by the gentleman, understood to be alluded to.” I have, however, the authority of one of the Governors of the Infirmary, who is a gentleman well known to the majority of the Committee, to declare, that which he is ready to testify, namely, “that he was not alone so canvassed by “this gentleman; but farther, that he was introduced by “this gentleman to Dr. Farre himself, on the above “occasion.”

Then, as to the third allegation, the framers of the Report completely confirm it; for they distinctly alledge, that Mrs. Saunders, without consulting the editor, “improvidently” sold her interest in one hundred and nineteen remaining copies of her husband’s work, together with her right and interest on all future editions of the work, for the sum of fifty pounds. This sale sufficiently demon-

strates the distress of Mrs. Saunders, and makes out the truth of my fourth allegation, independently of the other evidence which I have cited.

What then have I stated, deserving of the epithets, "false and calumnious?" If any such charge can be substantiated against me, I call upon my opponents to meet me before any assembly of respectable gentlemen, and make out their case without any further controversy. I challenge my adversaries to a fair trial of the questions in dispute between us. Let neither call for a decision upon *ex-parte* statements, or partial views; but let both meet, face to face, before a society of gentlemen, willing to hear both sides, and to decide fairly.

Let this meeting take place, if my adversaries please, in the very committee-room of the London Eye Infirmary. The statement of evidence, and the investigation of facts, will not occupy much time; and, after due consideration, let such tribunal determine to which party the epithets of "false and calumnious" are really applicable.—I am willing to abide by the result. I feel satisfied that I should be able to convince those very gentlemen, whose names are coupled with those of my adversaries in the Report under consideration, that they have been as much misled as the gentlemen of the former Committee, who have now withdrawn from the connexion.

But I cannot doubt that the Governors and Subscribers at large of the London Eye Infirmary will feel themselves called upon to mark their disapprobation of this, the third essay of their Medical Officers, to abuse the benevolent character and just influence of that noble institution, by rendering its name a passport for slander,—an auxiliary for persecution—by perverting its popularity into an engine for the gratification of the spirit and the extension of the currency of private pique and professional jealousy.

POSTSCRIPT.

THE disposition of Dr. Farre towards me, and his regard to candour, the most cursory reader may decide upon, from the letter which he inserts in the Appendix to the Report, and which is addressed to Sir Charles Price. In his *impartial* examination of my "Claims to an improvement on the Operation of Mr. Saunders for the Cure of Ophthalmia"—Dr. Farre, to support his own conclusion, adds the authority of Mr. Travers and Mr. Lawrence, stating that "*they find nothing in this alledged improvement but a slight variation in the mode of carrying into effect the principle of treatment pointed out by Mr. Saunders.*"

But let the reader judge of the Doctor's candour from what follows:—

He gives garbled extracts from the opinions of the medical gentlemen appointed by Government, to examine the merits of my practice, in order to prove that they were not agreed on the question of improvement in substituting the knife for the scissors. These extracts are, indeed, culled with so much art, that by breaking the context the purport of each opinion is quite perverted. With respect to Sir Henry Halford's opinion; he says—
 "Now, although the improvement is actually asserted, we are to consider the words as expressing not the fact, but his opinion, which was evidently formed from the few cases, on which cases only Sir W. Adams's operation had been tried." Upon what other cases, may I ask, was Sir H. Halford to form his opinion?

Dr. Farre asserts, that "Dr. Baillie does not go the same length as Sir H. Halford; but says that his (my) mode of operating by a knife of his own invention *promises* to be much more efficient."—Dr. Baillie's words, are "*I think he (Sir W. Adams) has the merit of introducing a practice*

“ *which is likely to be highly useful in a particular chronic state of ophthalmia.*”—“ As the late Mr. Saunders’ proposed to accomplish the same object by scissors, and actually performed the operation in two cases, the invention of Sir W. Adams cannot be considered as quite original. His mode of operating however by a knife of his own invention promises to be much *more efficient*, and to be *more expeditious in accomplishing the cure than that of Mr. Saunders*, and likely to preserve the eyes of many individuals which otherwise would have been lost.”

With regard to Mr. Cooper’s opinion, Dr. Farre states, that “ instead of asserting that it is an improvement, he simply says that the knife *appears* to be the preferable instrument.” Mr. Cooper’s words are—“ To effect this purpose (the removal of the granulations) the *knife appears* to be the *preferable instrument*, as it *completely removes the whole of the diseased part*, and produces the *most expeditious, as well as the most perfect, cure.*”

Dr. Farre affirms that “ Mr. Abernethy, far from giving Sir W. Adams either the merit of originality or improvement, is simply of opinion that his practice is meritorious, and deserving of a fair and prudent trial.” Mr. Abernethy’s words are “ Sir W. Adams candidly acknowledges that he derived both his opinions and the principle of his practice from Mr. Saunders ; and from strongly perceiving the necessity of smoothing the inner surface of the eyelids, *he was led to undertake more bold and decisive measures for this purpose, than would in general have been adopted.*” After stating in what my practice consists, Mr. Abernethy adds “ it appears to me to have restored a useful degree of sight to several patients, whose cases would in general have been considered desperate ; I am, therefore, of opinion that the practice pursued by Sir W. Adams, in the third stage of these cases of

“ ophthalmia, is meritorious and deserving in general of a fair
“ and prudent trial*.”

But the perusal of the whole of the Ophthalmic Report, which is inserted (p. 25.) in my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, will fully illustrate the feeling and principle of Dr. Farre. He might as well have selected half a sentence as an exposition of the whole, as to have put the contents of that Report in the shape he has done. His purpose was to present a paraphrastical version under the guise of literal quotation, with a view to produce an impression injurious to my professional character; while the fact is, that the Ophthalmic Committee decidedly pronounced in favour of my practice.

Doctor Farre declares that “ the case of Mr. Corlett, of Homerton, has been published by me under gross misrepresentation.” In compliance with the request of Mr. Corlett, I insert the following letter, which I received within these few days.

Homerton, May 11, 1818.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I had this day a pamphlet put into my hand entitled “ Report of the Committee of the London Eye Infirmary, occasioned by the false and calumnious statements of Sir W. Adams, &c.” In this Report there is a letter addressed to the Chairman of that Committee by Dr. Farre, in which he takes an unwarrantable liberty with my name † when alluding to my letter, dated February 1815, addressed to you, which he alledges “ is published under gross misrepresentations.”

“ That letter being inserted, without comment on your part, the “ misrepresentations” if any, must be made by me.

“ As a friend and warm supporter of that laudable Institution the

* In a letter which I addressed to Mr. Abernethy the day preceding that on which his opinion was given, I stated that I had found Mr. Saunders’s practice in this stage of the disease, “ *so painful, slow, and inefficient*, that I endeavoured to substitute some other mode of treatment, by which these objections might be avoided.” The first sentence is evidently in reply to this part of my letter, and expresses his opinion that my practice was superior to that of Mr. Saunders.

† See page 101.

London Eye Infirmary. I take leave to refer Dr. Farre to his particular friend and late colleague Mr. Travers, who well knows the truth of every thing in that letter; and as I have reason to believe that Mr. Travers is not unacquainted with what is due to the character of a gentleman and a man of honour, he will not hesitate in giving ample testimony to the correctness of that simple narrative of facts. But if his recollection should fail him on any *one* point, the servants who attended me at the Guildhall Coffee-House, can (if applied to) assist him in refreshing his memory.

I am, Dear Sir,

Your obedient servant,

THOS. CORLETT."

"P. S. Should you deem it proper to take public notice of this pamphlet, I request you will do me the favour of giving a place to the above letter, as a caution to Dr. Farre never again to take an improper liberty with my name."

One observation more on Dr. Farre's letters, and I have done. He appears to think that he has not effected quite enough on the present occasion. Prudently avoiding all discussion with regard to the *emetic* and the *nauseating* practice, which he formerly pronounced to be the same, he says, "I shall reserve for the third edition of Mr. Saunders's posthumous work, now called for by the profession, the consideration of certain other points, in which I have also to contrast the merit of Mr. Saunders with the pretensions of Sir W. Adams, especially in the use of Emetics, as one of the means of curing the acute stage of the Egyptian Ophthalmia." Thus Doctor Farre threatens me with another attack. As Author—Editor—or Physician—he resolves not to relax his systematic hostility to my character. But, having so fully exposed the injustice of his aspersions, and the character of his misrepresentations, the public and the profession must, I am persuaded, approve my determination to take no further literary notice of him or his productions.

